

A
POLITICAL
AND
CULTURAL
WEEKLY

JANUARY 27, 1967

Handwritten: Please return money can I see

Palmer Jones

*The Old Gang—And The Reluctant Voter • What
s Hanoi Or Havana To Indira Gandhi? • Goa's
Choice • More About The Ferment In China • CMPO
gain • The B.M. Kaul Story • An American Satire*

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TRACTION TYPE FLUID COUPLING

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ELECTRIC OVERHEAD TRAVELLING CRANE

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THE LOCUSTS

MINISTERS uncertain of their constituencies after five years of misrule tend to file more than one nomination paper. But the Bihar Chief Minister, by filing his papers for 16 seats, perhaps set up a record. A much hunted man at every election meeting, he will not be able to have that peace and equanimity of mind so necessary to celebrate the glory of being a Republic within the British Commonwealth on January 26. The same will be the case in some other States where pot-bellied Congressmen are worried to death about their future. They have had such a good time for so many years that their kurtas are bursting at the seams. Their bodies, too.

It is a pity that we cannot yet proclaim from house-tops that the corpse is dead. It is a thousand pities that on January 26 the living dead will again exhort the nation to discipline, hard work and what not, and then go back into their air-conditioned Anglo-Moghul morgues in New Delhi and enter into deals with the Americans that stink to high heavens. The locusts will continue to eat the years, and political pimps turn this ancient land into a shameless harlot opening up her womb to any foreign food merchant.

For the fact that the Congress will be in the gaddi at the Centre and in most States, though in reduced numbers, we have to blame ourselves. Something has gone awry with the Opposition. Economic privations and discontent should have bred a maturer, more united, more fighting opposition, whose members would not fall head and shoulders in love with the stately buildings where speeches are made. Speeches are alright as far as they go, but in most cases they do not go beyond the walls of Parliament and Assembly. The Press seldom reports them at length; and even if they were so reported, how many people would read them in a country where illiteracy is widespread? We have aped Westminster, but the essence of democracy based on literacy is not there. What we have is a big sham, but thanks to the English education of the intelligentsia, we are so obsessed with the Western concept of parliamentary democracy that we are ready to swallow everything.

The ULF in West Bengal has called upon the people to condemn Congress rule on January 26. Meetings and rallies are to be held, but will the party leaders be able to reach the villagers on a big scale? Though the countryside will elect 200 out of the 280 legislators in West Bengal, what is going on in villages is little known. Will election tubewells, pacca roads and almost the record price of paddy so captivate the villager that he will vote Congress? This question would not have been asked if there had been a live and kicking kisan movement, if attempts had been made to alienate the poor peasant from the rich jotedar who still passes off as a benefactor of the indigent. The village economy is such that class-antagonisms are still veiled.

But let us not be jaundiced. Let us hope that, despite leftist disunity, sanity will prevail among the people on February 19. If the ULF is able to drive home its message on January 26 and end the air of apathy among the voters, it will be all to the good.

Voters In Sulks

The Indian general election is said to be the biggest show on earth, and there is no doubt it will continue to be so despite Dr Sushila Nayar. In the context of our ramshackle economy it may also be the most expensive ritual in the world. More than any other party the Congress needs this ablation, for in the interval it mocks at all democratic principles. The general election means to it an opportunity to secure a renewal of its waywardness, a so-called mandate from the people to pursue its capricious course for another five years. Each general election in India has been followed by a heavy erosion of democracy, so that on the eve of the fourth, only the framework, bare of all contents, remains.

Demagogic claims by Congress leaders that their party has the support of the people have already become tiresome. They will be more so if once again the Congress is returned to power. It is one thing to secure the majority of votes cast and quite another to have the support of the people in the individual and collective misdeeds of those in authority. Any claim to the latter remains untenable as long as voters do not have the right of recall. Many factors, open and clandestine, may influence the decision of voters at the polling booth, and just because a voter has dropped his ballot paper in the Congress box he does not endorse in advance all that the Congress may do in the next five years.

Taller claims apart, even the Congress pretension that it enjoys the loyalty of the majority of the electorate has less validity in West Bengal than in most other States. In the last general election, nearly 45 per cent of the voters kept away from polling stations, and the Congress could secure only about 48 per cent of votes cast. Under a system of proportionate representation, the Congress strength in the State legislature would have been much less than what it is; but that is another matter. Obviously, the 45 per cent who did not exercise their franchise had rejected the Congress but not been able to decide which of the Opposition parties they should support. Maybe, some of them reached the cynical conclusion that none of the parties was worth voting for. With the

polling only three weeks away, there is an extraordinary lack of animation in the State this time, and if the present mood persists there may be a further drop in the number of votes cast. In the last election the drop was over 13 per cent and next month may show a decline of the same, if not greater, order.

The failure of the left opposition parties to forge an overall unity and the emergence of two left fronts confronting each other in nearly one-third of the constituencies may be among the reasons for this indifference. But the omissions of the opposition do not extenuate the commissions of the Congress. The boundaries of inaction and reaction often overlap, and those who may not cast their votes out of frustration or disgust will help the Congress in West Bengal to another term of office, though unwittingly, in more than one way. The stay-aways will mostly be the politically mature on whose support the Congress can count the least. The non-political and the apolitical are susceptible to pressures of infinite variety which the Congress with its organisational and financial resources can employ in ample measure.

Defeat of the Congress in West Bengal can well be an end in itself. But it need not be so, despite the present differences between the left parties. A Congress debacle may clear the air, and the mass enthusiasm that will be generated may lay the ground for fruitful cooperation between the major left parties. No doubt, with an unsympathetic, if not openly hostile, Government at the Centre, a left Government in West Bengal will be constricted in many ways. It may not get its due from New Delhi; nor cooperation from officers in the higher echelons. But even in a restricted sphere it may show results which have eluded the Congress for two decades. It may not be able to root out corruption, but it can certainly halt further spread; maybe by both example and precept it can cleanse the administration partly. All these and other possibilities will open up only if the Congress is defeated. The first task is to overthrow the discredited set; that will be much easier to accomplish if the sulky voter decides to exercise his right.

A Sell-Out To Order

Mr Eugene Victor Rostow has come and gone; Mrs Gandhi has now told us part of what transpired between the Americans and those Ministers and civil servants who sat with him across the table. What deal did they strike? The messages emanating from the White House are strident and clear: the Americans are no longer willing to sell us wheat *gratis*. They want payment, and in hard currency. If the Indians do not have the cash, let them beg it of the Japanese, of the Italians, of the French—and pay the Americans. In fact, an important purpose of Mr Rostow's safari is to convince these Consortium countries that whatever credit is due to India must no longer be paid out to finance the purchase of machinery and equipment; the bulk of the credit should be earmarked for their despatch of food and fertilizers to this country. All that the matching formula in regard to food aid implies is that the U.S. administration now wants to be compensated for at least fifty per cent of food it arranges to send to India. If India cannot raise the money on her own, the Americans will try to raise it from Japan and Italy and such others, who will then be told to adjust it against the aid they had already promised to India.

— And all this is being discussed and negotiated without so much as our leave. The Americans have taken over. Irrespective of the point of view of the Government and the planning authorities in New Delhi, the U.S. administration now feels strong enough to tell third nations in what form to offer assistance to India. They know that if they agree, the poor Indians, who have nowhere else to go, have to fall in. What else did take place between the U.S. Under-Secretary of State and the earlier Poage mission and our cringing Ministers? Perhaps, while Mr Rostow was willing to offer only 4 million tons or thereabouts, they were imploring for 10 million tons or more and in order to get the prayer granted, were offering in exchange another sizable chunk of our sovereignty. The national food budget has been a non-starter, and for obvious reasons. Despite the querulousness and the food-dragging, the various State agencies together were still able to procure roughly 3 million tons of foodgrains.

Latest reports suggest, on the average, procurement till now this year is only around to 25 to 30 per cent of last year's rate. This has to be so, for the big producers and the racketeers have to make their pile, otherwise they cannot make their kickback to the ruling party's election funds. Nobody need therefore be surprised if the total procurement in the country on State account fails to reach even one million tons for the whole year.

Under such circumstances, the only element of any import in a food budget will be the balancing item, food, from outside, of the order of 11 to 12 million tons. Our famous politicians and civil servants will thus do anything to propitiate Mr Rostow and the distant emperor whose plenipotentiary he was last week. Our Ministers, buckling under pressure, have agreed to stop all exports to Cuba barring non-strategic goods, food and medicines, and not to trade with North Vietnam at all. When it came to be known that India has been sending trucks and other things to South Vietnam, the Government said Hanoi, too, could have those things if it wanted to. Now it is disclosed that trade with Hanoi stopped in 1962 and that we *shall not* trade with it.

Mrs Indira Gandhi is travelling very much beyond even where Miss Reita Faria had been to, and we shall be hard put to pick a row with Radio Peking when it calls her a stooge of the Americans. If the undertaking to the USA is not selling out our honour, what else is? Mrs Gandhi has proved herself to be the most willing accomplice of American neo-colonialism. She has brought things to such a pass that one is ashamed to be described as an Indian.

Goa, Going, Gone

Daman and Diu had said it earlier; Goa followed on Wednesday evening. None of them wanted any part of Gujarat and Maharashtra; and, instead of cursing the ex-Portuguese colonials, the ex-British colonials should really ask themselves why from Aijal to Panjim so many people are anxious to get out. Mr Chavan, the brave new Home Minister, had caved in on cow slaughter in regard to Union Territories; it was Mr Chavan too who wanted the former Portuguese territories to be

very much in his beloved Maharashtra. He must be a rather unhappy man today, with few shedding many tears for him. His supreme error will be to think that the people of Goa, Daman and Diu have only rejected Maharashtra and Gujarat, and that only because these States are dry; that the rejection is not of India, that is Bharat. Mr Chavan will delude himself further if he thinks that Goa, Daman and Diu have opted to be under his wings, the Union Home Ministry. The people have merely indicated their preference for the frying pan to the fire.

The opinion poll, a referendum by another and longer name, was carried out with apparent fairness, contrary to our forebodings last week; the Government of India deserves a certain amount of credit for it. There the credit ends. There were all sorts of manoeuvres to "grab" the former Portuguese territories, although Mr Nehru had given a firm undertaking that the special status of former French and Portuguese areas would be respected for a long time to come; he spoke of the French personality and the Portuguese personality being preserved for at least ten years. Since Nehru, however, there have been many attempts to "grab" additional territory; and it has never occurred to these gentlemen "with the gift of the grab" that they are themselves ex-colonials, only of another kind, and perhaps in no way superior. New Delhi needs to rethink its superior airs vis-a-vis former Indian States as well as former non-British possessions. The extent to which our ravens with plumes borrowed from peacocks have discredited India in Asia and Africa may never be correctly estimated. Must that happen within the country too?

In Goa and some of the former Indian States and hill areas the Government of India has often displayed an attitude of imperialism while mouthing fraternity; and this has created situations here, there and everywhere. New Delhi must know that the "opinion poll" in the former Portuguese territories is perhaps only a beginning; similar claims from other areas are almost certain to come, for the elections for Assemblies and Parliament are rarely on clear and precise issues. A referendum is for this or that; and the verdict is unambiguous.

It remains to be seen whether the

Union Home Ministry, now headed by so partisan a man as Mr Chavan, will accept the unequivocal verdict of Goa, Daman and Diu with good grace or use its special powers to punish those who dared to dissent and told Mr Bandodkar where he got off. The verdict of Goa, Daman and Diu should make the entire country think just what has made it so unappetising for so many. A Union Territory seems to them only a lesser evil than a State where the river of thought has already declined into a drain of parochial superstition. It may be too much to hope, however, that the recent knocks to the Hindu ethos outweigh those now being administered by men fasting in defence of the cow to the total disregard of men that may be starving.

Air Selling

Everyone could see it was coming. Mrs Gandhi's craze for television has only precipitated the advent of advertising in Indian broadcasting, for the country simply could not afford the cost of TV; but the Prime Minister, aided and abetted by the Chanda Committee, wants it as insistently as a child wants his toy. And what a toy TV is going to be! It is yet uncertain when or how television will come; but the debasement of sound broadcasting seems fairly imminent.

The Indian Society of Advertisers has already welcomed the idea, although the Press, for its own selfish reasons, seems less enthusiastic; there will be so much less money for the newspapers. Only 10% of total broadcasting time will initially be available for commercials. "Initially" seems the operative word. In the early forties C. Day Lewis and others wrote of defending the bad against the worse (which did not make for great verse) and it may be wondered whether we may not be engaged in a similar exercise. The conquest of Madison Sarani strikes new terrors. To dullness may now be added a new brazenness; to monotony a new conformism. Much worse, there may be a new liveliness; the sort that Radio Ceylon provided at no cost to India and open only to those that way inclined. With commercialisation of sound broadcasting in India, we may have no choice. It may be only a matter of time before a bril-

liant statement by Mrs Indira Gandhi on the Fourth Plan transforming the face of India and an announcement by President Johnson emptying Indian bellies is intercepted by a commercial claiming that a food preserve has been found which keeps your stomach at once full and healthily empty. Here is AIR giving you the ewes, cows having gone to the polling booths.

What really needs notice is the contamination of commercialisation. We are not being highminded about it; we carry advertisements ourselves and would like some more. With a Government department it is another matter. It has no conscience, of course. Its books are in the final analysis maintained by some other agency. AIR is a poor thing; but it is, like Touchstone's, a poor thing but its own. It will no longer be so. The recent Government decision has set the seal on broadcasting in India. The Choice of India is now the Voice of India. A seller's market we call it.

Congress Ventriloquists

Mr Atulya Ghosh and Mr Sadoba Patil have each a style and a flavour for inventing things. They have no fear of contradicting themselves and none at all of being called into account by anybody anytime. For they are the monarchs (or rather diarchs or triarchs) of all they survey; at least they have the privilege to imagine themselves so until someone else turns up and turns them out or cuts them to size or makes them wipe the floor. That time is not yet, and at the moment the goings for them are good. Between themselves Mr Ghosh and Mr Patil have divided the job selling the newest slippery version of the Congress Party's ideology. It is most likely that they didn't hold any prior consultation; so that each has come out with his own radical-seeming Congress dope. Mr Ghosh has decked himself out in the infra-red robes of quasi- or para-Marxism; Mr Patil, a Bombaywallah, is content with pale-pink Democratic Socialism. Since both Ghosh and Patil are the Congress Party's newest ideologues the discrepancy is obvious. But that doesn't matter at all. All is forgiven in election-time, also all forgotten after the elections are over.

Marxism, quasi or para, or Demo-

cratic socialism—which really is the Congress Party's ideology? It can't be both, it must be the one or the other or none at all. "Brandy or rum?" Sam Weller asked; "All is vanity", answered Brother Stiggins; "That I know", Sam retorted in exasperation, "but which is your particular vanity?" Is quasi-Marxism Mr Ghosh's particular vanity? Is Democratic Socialism Mr Patil's? The Congress itself has had never any particular vanity so far as ideology goes. A mish-mash of Gandhism served for a while; Nehru wrapped it up in a flimsy texture of socialistic pattern. Nehru posed himself to be a great ideologue but he laid down the rule that Congress must have no ideology except that of the Kumbha Mela. Shastri, timid man, on his own admission, fought shy of ideology. Lesser men who run the state Congress machines and administrations have never needed any ideology; the party and the police are all they have needed, also the plums of politics which are theirs to enjoy without worrying over much about the ideology they are supposed to promote.

With the elections so near and the leftists all around with their ideological battle cries, Messrs Ghosh and Patil evidently have felt the need for launching an ideological counter-offensive. The Congress has had no ideologue since Nehru and then that impossible fellow Krishna Menon has gone over to the enemy. Now who else but Messrs Ghosh and Patil could step into the breach and man the ideological guns? Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* demolished God; but his faithful servant, Lampe, felt sorrowful, so Kant had to restore God in his *Critique of Practical Man*. Mr Patil is a practical man, having demolished Nehru as best as he could, he has now set about restoring Democratic Socialism. Under Nehru this thing called Democratic Socialism meant very little; actually nowhere in the world has it really meant anything at all. Under Mr Patil, who must all the time be looking over his shoulders at his financial patrons and bankers, this pre-election display of Democratic Socialism cannot very well be anything but a vast verbal fall-out. Since Democratic Socialism can be equated with anything, Mr Patil may well claim that the Sacred Cow = democratic socialism, adult franchise = democratic socialism, less bread and more taxes and more black

money = democratic socialism and so on and on.

Mr Atulya Ghosh with his characteristic devil-may-care air has projected the Congress image in Marxist outlines. The qualifying 'near' or 'quasi' added to Marxism hardly improves his position. Marxism, it has been threateningly declared often by no less a person than Mr P. C. Sen, and also others, is foreign ideology and the Congress will have no truck with it in any form. This is quite understandable. Even in its reformist or revisionist version, Marxism must be lethal to the jotedars and other Congress lords. And Mr Atulya Ghosh is shrewd enough to know what is what.

It will not do to flirt with Marxism even as fiction. Like some idols this one is too dangerous to keep and play with. But then Messrs Ghosh and Patil have been perhaps merely play-acting and in that case we have wasted so many hundred words, which should therefore better end with an American fable on the Ghosh-Patil performance: A man came into a bar with a mouse and a frog; the mouse stood up and sang, and the frog played the piano; when people asked, "How can that mouse sing like that?" the fellow replied, "Because the frog is a ventriloquist".

More About China

A Correspondent writes:

K. S. Karol, author of *Mao's China* which he wrote recently after a prolonged stay in China was interviewed the other day by a number of European television and broadcasting agencies on the latest phase of the cultural revolution. According to him, the promoters of the cultural revolution, above all Mao Tse-tung, wanted to establish a sort of direct democracy—a system where the masses can not only criticize but also repudiate and disown their leaders. Such a movement cannot but come up against the opposition of vested interests. If one adds to the rather elementary level of political understanding of the Red Guards who have played the role of shock-troopers in this operation, it is hardly surprising that violence has erupted. One should never underestimate the latent dangers of such a situation. Nevertheless such sporadic instances of violence that have occurred so far can

hardly be called a civil war as some people have merrily described them. A civil war is nothing short of an armed trial of strength between two or more groups, each of which is well established and defends its position publicly. Developments in China have yet to take that shape.

Indeed Karol does not think that there are well-defined factions in Peking, but there is no doubt that the cultural revolution has split the leadership at all levels. Such a momentous undertaking contains too many unknowns for it to be easily acceptable to all; moreover, its very nature demands that new solutions are taken everyday to face up to unforeseeable circumstances. New divisions and dissensions thus come up to the surface almost every other day.

Chinese official publications that admit the existence of political differences tend to be too vague either on the nature of these differences or on the exact authors of these conflicting points of view. So, people are reduced to pure guesses about the "doves" around Liu Shao-chi and the "hawks" around Lin Piao. But it is impossible to classify all the leaders according to such highly oversimplified categories.

Finally, Karol is highly sceptical about the value of news gathered almost exclusively from Red Guards' posters in Peking and elsewhere. The hand-written documents are often unreadable, can be easily misunderstood and mistranslated; as they do not emanate from any authoritative sources, there is no way of checking the news. In any case, there is no one in London, Paris or New York to correct them or verify the source. What is more, the poster-writers often live in the land of fantasy, blending their desires with reality in no discernible way. Rarely have sources of information been so precarious and it is imprudent to base on them a serious analysis of the situation.

Elections will be quite a wonderful affair this time.

S. A. Dange

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Business Manager

Calcutta Diary

CHARAN GUPTA

THE Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization has, with much fanfare, made public the long-awaited long-term plan for urban development in the city. This is the plan on which the labours and leisures of the whole army of capital-intensive foreign experts who have been here since 1961 have been expended. It is an expensive plan and, not only because it has involved a sizable investment of funds; it has also involved high expectations. None of which, it at last seems, can now be justified *ex post*. Up to a point it is possible for any group of intelligent laymen, with some assistance from engineers and economists, to produce an integrated and consistent plan of long-term development for Calcutta. One has only to make a number of assumptions regarding growth rates of population, agriculture, industry, income, capital inflow, and so on, in the hinterland; a certain string of conclusions about what additional facilities need to be set up, or alternative provisions made, in the urban complex will follow automatically. The 'plan' which the Ford Foundation experts have now presented does not represent anything beyond this rudimentary exercise. What irks one more than anything else is the transparent irresponsibility of it all. Very little is said about how even a fraction of the resources that would be needed will be collected and deployed. If Calcutta is to be salvaged for the nation, this cannot be done without the Union Government chipping in. The required funds will run into hundreds of crores, as the CMPO has already admitted on its own. When Mr Asoka Mehta is chary to allocate even ten crores of rupees for Calcutta's development, the CMPO exercise is little short of a silly prank. The joke is not only cruel, it is also unseemly. The aspect of political lobbying apart, the CMPO could at least make a distinction between what is feasible and what is the optimum. This demarcation could have been made not only for schemes over the twenty-year period but also for those falling within shorter compartments of time, say, within the next five or ten years. The

arithmetic of finance could similarly have been worked out on alternative assumptions on the contents of the 'packages'. It is easy to come out with the pet response, "Finance, after all, is not the responsibility of technical experts". Unfortunately it is. An expert ceases to be one and is little short of a charlatan if he deliberately ignores the single most important factor on which future development depends.

Part of the frolic accompanying the publication of the CMPO has consisted of the ceremonial presentation, press briefings and an exhibition on the details of the development plan. I found it particularly disgraceful that nobody, amid this festivity, thought it necessary to make even a cursory reference to the late Sachin Chaudhuri's contributions towards the starting of metropolitan planning in Calcutta. Till the visit of the World Bank team in 1960, Calcutta was the recipient of occasional reprimands from Jawaharlal Nehru; the Government's owning of responsibility regarding the plight of the city would almost end there. It was Sachin Chaudhuri's continuous cajolings that forced the World Bank team to study the problems of Calcutta in depth. Subsequently, it was again in the pages of *The Economic Weekly* that Sachin Chaudhuri sponsored the idea of an integrated plan for Calcutta's development. Not quite stopping there, he came to Calcutta to buttonhole Dr B. C. Roy and Mr Atulya Ghosh. There was no response from Mr Ghosh, but Dr Roy was impressed. There was no recalling of those beginnings this week, and Sachin Chaudhuri is dead, as is Dr Roy.

This paragraph may not promote international amity and goodwill, but it can't be helped. I don't know much about the Soviet Union or any of the other East European countries, and am therefore in no position to make authoritative pronouncements on whether, as alleged, the trend there is really from socialism to capi-

NOW

talism. Can't one still draw one or two tangential inferences? By now a fair number of representatives of these nations are residing in our major cities, scattered over delegations, consulates, trade representations, cultural and information bureaus, and so on. The company these representatives from the countries of 'socialism' keep fills me with dismay. Whether it be an anniversary occasion or a cultural do, the most reactionary elements in Indian society invariably manage to get invited by the East European embassies and consulates. There was a time when the friendship societies formed to promote goodwill between this country and the East European nations would be composed of intellectuals of repute and politicians with impeccably Left credentials. All that has changed. These societies have now been usurped by retired members of the Indian Civil Service, veterans of bureaucratic, anti-people malfeasance, and by elaborate-looking businessmen, who have struck paydirt, thanks to the rupee payment arrangements. It will be unfair to generalise, but certainly most of the East European representations display a bias in favour of Establishment figures. It could be that they want to play safe; with the Minoo Masanis eagerly waiting in the wings to trip them up at the first hint of 'indiscreet' behaviour, they perhaps lean over backwards in picking carefully persons with whom to have social intercourse. But could it be that this is the culmination of peaceful co-existence—this blurring of distinction between yesterday's devout socialists and today's phalanx of shady civil servants and still shadier businessmen? If love for a East European country also means that I have to share membership of the club with army types and trigger-happy policemen, I would rather turn into a votary of Samuel Goldwyn and include myself out.

* *

Shri Hari Kishan, Lal Bahadur Shastri's eldest son, has obtained the Congress nomination for the Allahabad Lok Sabha constituency, which his father used to represent. Nothing could be fairer in the Indian climate. Heredity substitutes for natural selection in so far as political positions are concerned. Let us not be bashful, Mrs Indira Gandhi is the Prime Minister today because she is

Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter. Ravi Shankar Sukla's son is a Union Deputy Minister. Govind Ballabh Pant's son too is in the Lok Sabha, and an aspirant for a Cabinet post. All these individuals, I am sure, will enter the caveat that they are today what they are not because they are their respective fathers' offspring, but despite their being so. It is an old story, this, the life and hard times of the children of famous parents. If I am allowed to take a swipe sideways, I might add that the sanctity of hereditary rights in this country extends even to athletics and sports. The Nawab who has now been installed as our quasi-permanent cricket captain would have been hard put to justify his inclusion in the team if he did not happen to be the son of his cricketer-father. The hereditary principle is here at play, with some assist from old-style feudalism. There are curioser things happening around us. All India Radio is part of the Government of India, the one which is supposed to be rushing towards the socialistic pattern of society. I chanced to tune in to the radio one day during the famous test match a few weeks ago at the Eden Gardens. There were three gentlemen doing the English commentary, but obviously one was more equal than the others. Every time a ball was delivered or a stroke offered, the timorous two, reverence oozing from their voice, would solicit the opinion of 'Your Highness' on the quality of the ball or the stroke. Intrigued, I kept the radio on. 'Your Highness', I discovered, was Mr Fatehsingh Gackwad, alias the Maharaja of Baroda.

Suddenly, the elections seem to be upon us. It is not just because this week coincided with the filing of the nominations. I think it is more on account of the hustling of the pitch, in speeches and posters and door-to-door campaigning. And, let me add, in mutual maligning and name-calling. There are several indications that this one may turn out to be the dirtiest of the general elections so far in this State. I have on my desk a pamphlet, anonymously published, containing a vitriolic attack on a prominent Left CPI leader. The vulgarity of the allegations and innuendoes, none substantiated, against an individual who must have

spent at least twenty years in British and Congress prisons, makes one wonder about the limits people are willing to travel to give vent to personal pique. The burden of the main grievance against the gentleman, as far as I could gather, is that, in the last elections, he 'engineered' the victory of Communist candidates over a number of 'progressive' Congressmen. This must be, according to some people's theology, an unpardonable sin.

* *

Eugene Victor Debs was the pioneer of workers' movements in the United States in the last century, and even our own brats know of Walt Whitman. Early in this century, a gentleman in Connecticut, liberal in his views and attitudes, with just a touch of sympathy for socialism, decided to name his sons Eugene Victor Rostow and Walt Whitman Rostow. Both the sons have now arrived, and are the most trusted of Lyndon B. Johnson's advisers. If the American President's crusade against Communist 'totalitarianism', in Vietnam and elsewhere, ever attains a measure of success, much of the credit will go to the two brothers. Walt Whitman is reported to have suggested to the President that dropping a nuclear bomb will do the trick in Vietnam, while Eugene Victor was in New Delhi last week to bully Indira Gandhi's frail Government into final submission. Such is the irony of socialist-sounding names.

It is not fanciful to describe the rioting that brought test cricket to a halt in Calcutta on new year's day as a pre-election trial of strength between the Congress and Communist parties....The Confrontation was clearly planned in advance. Some spectators came equipped with short sticks with rags tied at one end to serve as handy instruments of arson. These were brought into the grounds in kitbags while other accomplices smuggled in petrol.....On Sunday the police went into action early to stop encroachments on the grass verge. This was the signal that the mischief-makers were apparently waiting for.

The Indian correspondent in The Economist

The Fate Of The Congress—

A Historical Parallel

ATINDRA HOME-RAY

DEFEATED of the expected outcome of the July Revolution of 1830, the working men of France began to organise on a new basis—hostility to the capitalists as well as to the aristocrats. One revolution, they argued, that of 1789, had benefited the middle classes, another, that of 1830, the capitalists, the next was to be a revolution for the benefit of the working classes.

Equally disappointed are the Indian working masses with the outcome of independence as well as with the working of the Congress Government all these post-independence days. The process which had developed into the naval mutiny of 1946 could have been a counterpart of the French Revolution of 1789, but Indian leaders were clever enough to bring about independence by arrangement, as people call it.

The Indian independence movement has a French parallel in the July Revolution of 1830, so much so that it found Jawaharlal at the helm of Indian affairs as the July Revolution made Louis Philippe King of France. The two characters again had many qualities in common. Both had revolutionary antecedents and were apparently democratic in their manners and sentiments. Vehemently eager to show off his democratic bent of mind, Louis Philippe wore the cockade and accepted the revolutionary tricolour in place of the Bourbon *fleur de lys*. Surely, Jawaharlal was no less qualified with his favourite red rose, nor did he lie behind in demonstrating his democratic propensity. It was the custom of the 'citizen king', as Louis Philippe was fond of calling himself, to walk the streets unattended, dressed in a frock-coat and top hat and carrying an umbrella, the symbols of the new constitutional monarchy, as wig, knee-breeches and sword were of the old regime. The Prince of Ananda Bhawan, too, delighted in going about in a sherwani-coat, breeches and with a chaddi cap on, instead of his former Victorian costume. The citizen king

paraded his liberal views, and Nehru his socialistic sentiments, while both did everything in their power to ally themselves with the capitalist nobility—Philippe, with the 'July nobles', a class he himself created just as Napoleon had created a nobility from among his supporters in the army; and Jawaharlal, with the industrialists, although visibly it was the Indian bureaucracy, the branded agents of the capitalists, that received the patents of nobility from the Indian Prime Minister. But of the two, Jawaharlal was certainly the more dexterous in running with the hare, the working class, and hunting with the hound, the capitalist nobility.

Bismarck le petit

Maybe like Bismarck, Jawaharlal could discern the true nature of industrial society and its effect on the working class; and he had, it appears, the Bismarckian belief that if direct benefits were secured to the working classes, they would regard the Government as an institution serving their own needs and interests; and the socialists would sound their bird call in vain. But the Bismarckian belief ended only in Pecksniffian action; and Jawaharlal could not sum up his realisation, as Bismarck did, with social legislation meant for the welfare of the working men, nor could he, like Bismarck, bid goodbye to the policy of *laissez faire* which is destined to produce unbridled capitalism as well as a sullen, discontented working class alienated from the state which it regards as its enemy. Jawaharlal, with his fiery speeches, stands in sharp contrast to Cavour who is said to have remarked, "I cannot make a speech, but I can make Italy".

But bred in English environment and taught in an English school, Jawaharlal had the cleverness of an English bureaucrat. He tried his best to disarm the Indian masses, extending to them some political concessions, starting in collaboration with foreign capital some projects of in-

ternational standard, introducing metric weights and measures and decimal coinage, and bargaining at the cost of India's interest a high international position for himself, but carefully avoiding all social changes. Thus Jawaharlal simply caricatured the German Chancellor who, in order to register the support of the working classes, had practically added 'a few drops of social oil' in the recipe for the health of the State. But it would be a parody of truth to conclude that the sophistry of Jawaharlal was all in vain. What he had in view was, to the distress of the Indian people, realised to a great extent during his regime. And the illusion still persists, to the greater advantage of the daughter in office, that Jawaharlal's extension of political rights, electoral reform, universal suffrage, his foreign policy, economic planning, etc. were means to an end. But the end the working people have in view is not so much political as social change for universal benefit, while what Jawaharlal meant and his colleagues and pupils in government and party still commend is simple profiteering by trading on socialism.

Democracy of Corruption

And this is not all. The Indian masses today, after nineteen years of infernal rapacity and rascality under Congress rule, have known to their cost that the Congress legislator has all along been following an underhand policy designed to pervert Parliament into a willing tool in their hands, a system not unlike the one that existed in France under Louis Philippe and his pedantic Minister, Francois Guizot, who, like Jawaharlal of later days, believed that adherence to parliamentary formalities constituted political liberty. In order to grind out majorities for the Congress Government during the elections, the Indian Guizots at the Centre and the States have been organising a system of political corruption, as Francois Guizot did a century and three decades earlier, by extending local or national patronage and special favours to localities, and by bribing selected persons with permits, licences, contracts or covenanted posts.

Under this Congress rule that has hypocrisy for the stamp of its birth and corruption and tyranny for that of its life, the frustration of the masses mount as time passes. Jawaharlal is no more, Lalbahadur is gone, now

the daughter of Nehru has come in to wield the sword of dollar imperialism. The daughter may be groomed pretty well, but she lacks the dreamy and lackadaisical disposition of her father as well as the simplicity and probity of her immediate predecessor. Meanwhile, the fat is on the fire, and the people of India today deliver an indictment similar to that of Leon Gambetta against the regime of Napoleon III, against the Government. "On the fifteenth of August", they say in the language of Leon Gambetta, "there grouped, around a pretender, men whom India had never before known, men without talent, without honour, without rank, without position, men of the type who in all times had been the organisers of conspiracies. And these men have the audacity to pretend that they are the saviours and makers of India."

Gambetta's indictment sounded like the coming doom of the Napoleonic regime that had given the French people only a pinchbeck imperialism, and the Second French Empire with all its mock splendour and bloated vaunts was sent headlong to ruin. An end as inglorious as its beginning awaits the Congress Government. In the light of this analogy, it would not be a queer unhistorical proposition that a *levée en masse*, like the French one of Sep-

tember 4, 1870, will force the descendants of the British Indian rulers to clear off and show the heel as Napoleon III and party did. Agitation is rampant everywhere, in every quarter, among men of all professions against the government. And along the distinctly defined course of history, the present rule of the anti-social flag-waggers of socialism must go for good.

There remains a lack still, a very conspicuous lack at that. The youth are not consciously awake nor do their preceptors, the intellectuals, have the minimum scruples. India at this stage, even a century later, do not have uncompromisingly active stalwarts like the poet-statesman, Lamartine; the historian-statesmen, Thiers, Michelet and Quinet; the poet-agitator, Victor Hugo; the philosopher-statesman, Jules Simon; the novelist-agitators, Emile Zola and Anatole France; the journalist-agitator, Henri Rochefort; and the orator-statesman, Leon Gambetta; who, in the face of the worst persecution even, were almost a unit in opposing the 'crowned conspirator', Napoleon III. The intellectuals that India has today are, on the other hand, only pygmies, slugging as well as cringing. These drones are too obsequious to recite Jules Simon, Professor of Philosophy who, when meeting his class at the Sorbonne on December 5, 1851, the day after the *coup d'état* had been organised by Louis Napoleon for the throne, made the following statement which rang throughout France, "Gentlemen, it is my duty here to teach you philosophy. Today I owe you not a lesson, but an example. France is to be convoked tomorrow to approve or disapprove of what has just taken place. If there is going to be recorded one vote of disapproval, I wish to say to you now openly that it will be mine." Jules Simon was immediately dismissed from his position. Michelet and Quinet were likewise removed from their academic chairs. Victor Hugo was driven into exile. These persecutions and suppression could not in any way render the intellectuals *hors de combat*. But the pity of the situation here is that the intellectuals of India today are careerists, indulging only in dementing the young people with bourgeois vices, American lechery and awe-bred allegiance to the conspirator Government.

Delhi Letter

Goa Constrictor

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

AFTER Chhatrapati Shivaji, the man who has come closest to ruling Delhi, in the eyes of Maharashtra expansionism, is Mr Y. B. Chavan. But the modern Shivaji is not going to pull it off, not in the next five years at least, after the undivided loyalty he has pledged to the Prime Minister in the course of his interview to a news agency. Nothing could have disappointed Maharashtra expansionism more. But then came the Goa constrictor. Mr Y. B. Chavan's ill-concealed involvement in the Maharashtra-Mysore border dispute, where there was no need for one, has shattered his all-India image. But his role in engineering the Goa opinion poll and the rebuttal the sinister plan got last week has deprived Mr Chavan of whatever was left of his claim for national leadership. When Mr Shastri died, "YB" was the man Washington would have liked to see succeed him. But not now.

In the first place, how did the Centre allow itself to be taken for a ride on Goa? With Mr Chavan and Mr Patil in the Cabinet, Maharashtra expansionism has had a leverage denied any other chauvinistic fringe in the country. Of course, Mr Nanda was the father of the Haryana State but the Centre's solicitude for Maharashtra reflected in its multiplicity of standards over inter-State border disputes was the result of political blackmail.

There have been surreptitious attempts by the Maharashtra dignitaries in the Central Cabinet and the satraps of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee to stampede Goa into merging with Maharashtra by reopening the "merger issue" which Mr Nehru and the Government of India wanted shelved for 10 years.

Significantly, the reopening of the merger issue coincided with the reopening of the Mysore-Maharashtra border issue. The appointment of the one-man commission amounts to a reopening of the issues settled by the State Reorganisation Commission



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with a view to unsettling them. The boundary between the two States is to be drawn afresh. Mrs Indira Gandhi announced the plan for a commission under pressure, amidst a political fast by Senapati Bapat blessed by the Maharashtra Congress leadership. The resolution on it was hustled through the Bombay AICC amidst the tension of an agitation rigged up by the Maharashtra Congress leadership.

Almost simultaneously, the Central Cabinet was badgered into accepting the principle of an opinion poll on Goa. Mr Nanda was still the Home Minister. The earlier plan was to hold mid-term elections in Goa simultaneously with the General Elections in the country. If after the elections, the Goa Assembly voted again for merger (it did it once earlier at the instance of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party which had 14 of the 30 seats but polled a minority vote), it would be effected.

With Mr Chavan in the saddle as Home Minister, the Goa Opinion Poll Bill secured a priority while the bill to provide statutory guarantees for English as associate official language (an assurance given by Mr Nehru to the non-Hindi people) was relegated to the deep-freeze.

The Maharashtra leadership gambled and lost here. Virtually a "snap" poll, it was rigged up with great dexterity. The Maharashtra Pradesh Committee threw its weight behind the communal Maharashtrawadi Gamantak Party. The issue was sought to be given a communal turn because against the 40 per cent Christian vote, the Hindus accounted for almost 60 per cent. The idol of Bhavani was part of the mergerist processions. But the fact that 53 per cent voted for the status quo is proof that the Hindu communalist game has boomeranged.

It was the Goans versus all the all-India parties. Mr Dange who does not seem to remember that Pondicherry is yet to merge with Madras State, was for Goa's merger with Maharashtra, which implied he subscribed to the theory of the expansionists that Konkani was a dialect of Marathi and was not an independent language. The PSP was for merger and so were the SSP and the Jan Sangh. Jeeps, bikes and money for the mergerist campaign came from outside Goa.

The Centre, particularly Mr Chavan and Mr Patil, took Goa's merger

with Maharashtra for granted. But now those who were asked to rig up the poll would be blamed for their inefficiency. The margin by which merger was rejected was decisive and cannot be explained away. After all, no one wanted the opinion poll except the Maharashtra leadership.

Chandigarh was deprived of representative Government and made a Union Territory without the courtesy of an opinion poll. At the time of States reorganisation the tiny hill area of Coorg, which has a distinct culture and language, was merged with Mysore without an opinion poll. Pondicherry was liberated long before Goa but remains a Union Territory though it is linguistically not different from the Madras State that surrounds it. But where Maharashtra is interested, it has to be different if only because Mr Chavan and Mr Dange and a host of others in between think on the same wave-length.

Khaki and Khadi

If nothing else, Lt-Gen. Kaul's book (*The Untold Story*) should have triggered off a meaningful discussion on the relationship between generals and politicians in a democracy. New Delhi's cocktail circuit is buzzing with trivia about Gen. Kaul and his book. But between the juvenile awe for the khaki at one end and the unmitigated contempt for the politicians those in uniform have at the other, the real issue is nearly forgotten.

The Government's own reaction is one of wide-eyed innocence. The book is still under study by the Ministries and at one stage, a ban on the book was thought of. It would make little difference even if it were to be banned now because everybody who ought to read it have swotted it up. But the debate is still on the peripheral issues. It is of little consequence except to Lt-Gen. Kaul whether he vindicates himself or not or whether he has violated the Official Secrets Act or not. As long as the larger questions the book raises remain unanswered, the book will remain a damning indictment of the political leadership and of the army brass.

So many myths have been built around the army and generals like J. N. Chaudhuri. By convention and pretension, the defence services are impervious to public opinion and therefore, apolitical. For good or bad,

the Indian army is not politicalised yet but there is a lot of low-level personal politics at the highest level in the forces. This has distorted the relationship between the army leadership and the political leadership.

At the height of the Indo-Pak war last year, a new myth was sedulously fostered—that for the first time since freedom, the army command was left free to take decisions and the political leadership had taken the back-seat.

This was credible enough and restored sunshine to the hearts of those who traffic in public credulity. It was almost suggested that the army command prevailed over the late Mr Shastri. But the version would have been different if the army had met with a few reverses. The people would not have shouted "Gen. Chaudhuri Zindabad" and he would not have addressed a Press Conference at Vignan Bhavan disregarding all convention.

But to those who have reported the New Delhi scene during the Kutch flare up earlier, it was fairly well-known that the army command would not act without the political clearance. It sounded very brave when Mr Shastri told a cheering Parliament that India would have to leave to the Generals to decide what to do about the Kutch aggression. By implication, the Generals were free to decide on a retaliation at the point of India's choice. But the army did not hit back and there were insinuating suggestions that the commanders got cold feet. But in fact (this is already on record, in one of the journals of opinion) when the army command asked the political leadership if this meant total war with Pakistan, the political leadership got cold feet.

The relationship between the army leadership and the political leadership has tended to be rather tenuous in recent years. But at the end of the 22-day war, a new myth had been built up—that Gen. Chaudhuri had had free decision for the first time.

When Lt-Gen. Kaul tries to call this bluff, the reaction is a strident chorus in the Press denouncing the General's poor literary talent, his unsoldierly attack on his colleagues and what not. There is very little attempt to go beyond this.

The embittered tone of the book gives Gen. Kaul's attempt at self-justification and self-glorification away. But no one seems to spare him the

kind thought that he has been a helpless victim of character-assassination. Promotion politics of the army was carried to the newspapers. Gen. Kaul's promotion was an issue the Menon-baiters seized upon to discredit him. All the questions of propriety and good taste now flung about were never raised then. If a book like *The Untold Story* is now a part of Gen. Kaul's private drama of vengeance, it is all in the game.

News agency summaries of the book have done little justice to the book. Whether the army bungled in NEFA or whether the army was really ill-equipped are questions best answered by the Henderson Brook inquiry report which the Government should in all fairness publish now. But the bigger charge made in the book—about the role of the political leadership, has gone unanswered yet. As long as it is, the credibility gap would remain wide. To those who know their Delhi beat, political assessments of a possible Chinese attack have always been at variance with military assessments. But it has always been the politician's game to

cry "wolf". For the last so many years, a Chinese attack has been predicted every summer and every winter.

Gen. Kaul's charge is straight as it is serious—that Mr Nehru's decision to "throw the Chinese out of NEFA" was dictated by political considerations and the pressure of rightist opinion rather than by overall long-term policy. If the army's hands were forced, the political leadership cannot escape its responsibility.

The elements which were stampeding the Government into pushing up the defence to the Thag La ridge (militarily a foolish step, according to strategists) were the first to blame the Government for sending out an ill-equipped army into action, freezing it to annihilation. Every situation needs scapegoats and Krishna Menon and Kaul came in handy.

New Delhi has an amorphous Press Corps, which has of late thrown up its own species of "Military Observers" and defence specialists, capable of dropping names—of generals and modern warfare equipment. The 22-day war yielded such a big harvest of them. But the interest of the Press

in defence has now lapsed into an interest in personalities rather than issues. Tangential snipping at this man or that is the favourite pastime with the galaxy that haunts the sombre corridors of the Defence Ministry. After all, don't they belong to the tribe that until a short while ago included Gen. J. N. Chaudhuri? The General's stint as the Military Correspondent of *The Statesman* was supposed to be a close secret, known only to three. That was what Gen. Chaudhuri assured us in his preface to the collection of his writings, "Arms, Aims and Aspects". But two more seem to have known it outside the trio.

Here's what Gen. Kaul says:

"Prem Bhatia, then on *The Statesman's* Staff, told me sometime in 1953 that Chaudhuri was the Military Correspondent of *The Statesman*. When I asked Chaudhuri whether what I had heard was true, he was taken back (sic.) and wondered who told me. When I named Prem Bhatia, Chaudhuri exclaimed: 'Bhatia had no business telling you this'."

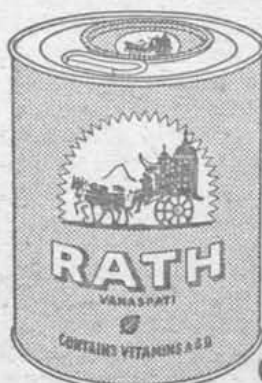
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The Still Untold Story

LINDSAY EMMERSON

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL B. M. Kaul has written a book* of very great interest. It is also a quite appalling book. The prose style is awful, with cliché piled on cliché and matters of moment constantly interrupted by personal trivia or rancour. Arrangement of thought is non-existent, merely a birdlike hopping from twig to twig; on page 203, for instance, Menon is "a striking figure with a dishevelled appearance" whereas on page 204 he is "the envy of many well-dressed men". The mental attitudes vary from those of a rather retarded subaltern (a song cited with approval, beginning "Indians! and those of four Div!", has to be read to be believed) to those of a Middle Eastern colonel. It would be most unsafe to trust any statement of fact without corroboration, and the opinions are usually worthless. (So is the index. See, for instance, entries or lack of entries under Maneckshaw, Niranjana Pershad, Pathania and Sen). Nevertheless, in spite of Kaul and not because of him, it is an important book.

Perhaps the most important point made clear is the levity with which Nehru and Menon inaugurated the "forward" policy against China in the autumn of 1961. They had been under fire from the Opposition over the Aksai Chin. At a secret meeting in November, an Opposition leader apparently said: "You have already presented 12,000 square miles of our land to the Chinese. Do you now want to present our women to them also?" At this, says Kaul, "Nehru went red in the face but did not say a word." Shortly after, Nehru held another meeting with Menon (Defence Minister), Thapar (Chief of Army Staff) and Kaul (Chief of the General Staff). "A discussion then followed, the upshot of which I understood to be that (since China was unlikely to wage war with India) there was no reason why we should not play a game of chess and a battle of wits with them, so far as the question of establishing posts was

concerned. If they advanced in one place, we should advance in another This defensive step on our part at best (sic) might irritate the Chinese but no more." That they would abruptly end the game by kicking over the board occurred to nobody, then or later.

Such views being held, what need urgently to arm? And the second important point illustrated is the heartbreaking cost to the nation of Krishna Menon. This man's domestic reputation for wit, like his international unpopularity, largely derives from the fact that he has the manners of a baboon, plus a baboon's cautious retreat into the pretense that it was all a joke if anybody effectively answers him back. Few of his subordinates had the courage to do so, though I know of one who threw a file at his head and Kaul says that he threw another, flung at his own, out of the door. Mostly Menon's decisions went by default, and what decisions they were! For ideological reasons, Menon would only buy arms abroad from certain countries. Result, often, no arms. For ideological reasons, he would not buy even boots from the domestic private sector. That a battalion in consequence went into action in Goa wearing gym shoes, with a formidable list of other operational deficiencies, did not greatly matter during that cake-walk. That men were expected not merely to exist in the freezing Himalaya but fight overwhelming Chinese forces, without boots, in cotton summer uniforms, with one blanket apiece, not to mention lack of ammunition and virtually all other logistic supply including food, mattered vitally. Yet Kaul still calls Menon a man who had "done extremely well on the administrative side", not somebody who ought to have been impeached. But then, Kaul was himself at all material times either Quartermaster General or Chief of the General Staff.

For the shambles in NEFA, Kaul even has the temerity to blame the Opposition because they egged on Nehru. Had this not happened, suggests this modern Chamberlainite, the clash might have come later, giving India time to prepare. Prepare

how? With Menon still turning out coffee percolators from ordnance factories? With the Chief of the General Staff still not even thinking of an operational defensive plan, demanding suitable military training in guerrilla or counter-guerrilla operations, especially adapted to mountain warfare, or raising Cain because he was not given adequate supply? Worst of all, General J. N. Chaudhuri (whom Kaul loses no opportunity of denigrating) would by then have been retired, with every prospect that Kaul would have commanded against Pakistan in 1965, when heaven help everybody. Kaul, of course, does not think so; he deems himself the very model of a modern lieutenant-general. A third useful service of this book is accordingly to confirm how grievously Nehru misled the nation in this regard, during the Defence debate of April 1961, particularly by suggesting that Kaul had remained in the infantry for the better part of his career.

The facts seem briefly as follows. Kaul passed out of Sandhurst in 1933 and as did every Indian officer, put in a year with a British regiment serving in India, in his case the East Surreys. Thereafter he was posted to the Rajputana Rifles, where he commanded a platoon and later a company; among its duties was manning a frontier post and periodically "showing the colour", during which he may (the record is not clear) have come under fire from the Mahsuds. In 1936, for perfectly honourable reasons (his mother was ill and he needed the extra money) he transferred himself to the Royal Indian Army Service Corps. With this, during World War II, he commanded a Motor Transport Regiment in the Arakan. Where, precisely, is vague; the war experiences related seem confined to once having his personal transport air-strafted (no uncommon experience for an officer even well behind the lines) and once getting accidentally in the way of an artillery barrage. His only subsequent combat experience was raising the Jammu and Kashmir militia in 1948, with military results which have been the subject of some scepticism, and accompanying them forward more or less as a visitor. In peace time he commanded a brigade and later a division.

In all this there is nothing in the least discreditable; merely in attempts

* The Untold Story

By Lieutenant-General B. M. Kaul
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to put a gloss on it. He was probably a very capable "Rice Corps" officer, for he is certainly a very hard worker; quite possibly, too, a capable staff officer, whose duties largely amount to supply on a wholesale rather than retail scale. But his deficiencies begin to show as a higher formation commander, when his interests were still administrative (the Amar housing scheme was a definite success, despite the excessive ballyhoo) to the neglect of operational training; as a Principal Staff Officer he fell down on both aspects of preparedness. And yet he thought himself a thwarted infantryman. When a Calcutta newspaper wrote to Army Public Relations for a file biography of Kaul, then Chief of the General Staff, Brigadier Sreenivasan gave it, on a plain and unidentifiable sheet of paper; a fatuously fulsome eulogy which, however, made no mention of the RIASC.

How incapable, perhaps through inexperience, Kaul was of commanding troops in action was horrifyingly to appear in NEFA. Into the details of that campaign it is not necessary to enter; indeed, on the basis of this book, it would be impossible. Surely almost uniquely among military autobiographies, it contains not a single map, or even diagram. Insufficiently identified units and officers bob up, or fail to bob up, all over the shop in what seems a mere regurgitated war diary, with Kaul shuttling between them like an agitated grasshopper. The account confirms, as we all knew already, that it was a chaos of order, counter-order, disorder; and, since so many of Kaul's printed orders are virtual gibberish, it is not surprising that so many were disobeyed. Well, he got himself into the jam, but everybody else too. When, for some reason, he later decided to "say farewell to the Army" by a final call on the new Chief of Staff, Chaudhuri asked him: "Why did not Thapar or you thump the table to say No to the Government in such a situation?" (provoking the Chinese with insufficient resources) Kaul says: "I gave him a suitable reply." Rumour has it that the reply was a five letter word.

India is now making itself economically strong.

M. C. Chagla

The Press

The Story As Told By Kaul

COMMENTATOR

NO book has perhaps received as much attention in Indian newspapers since independence as Lt-Gen. B. M. Kaul's *The Untold Story*. Kaul is not the first general to turn author in retirement, and judging by the commercial success he has achieved he will certainly not be the last. Whether the book would have attracted such notice had not a news agency man spotted that it was hot stuff is doubtful. A review in Sunday editions in the fulness of time, which is the common lot of books, whatever their subject-matter may be, would have raised no greater controversy than over the book by Gen. Chaudhuri a few months earlier or another by some other top brass of the Indian Army. All newspapers have published not only columns of extracts from Kaul's book, circulated by the news agency, but also the reactions of those whom the book has not shown in favourable light. Leader-writers and commentators have now taken up the matter, and the speculation is not merely on whether Kaul has told the whole story but what prompted him to tell it only a few weeks before the general election.

Patriot calls the "venomously silly book" an election stunt against whatever may be left of Jawaharlal Nehru in the Congress. The publicity it has received in the Press has nothing to do with the merits of the contents or the quality of the writing. The charges he makes against the late Prime Minister, Mr V. K. Krishna Menon, the entire Government and Gen. Chaudhuri are nauseating examples of petty hatred, and they are being trumped up and widely advertised only because they may be useful for destructive propaganda. This is the third book by an Indian General that openly criticises the Government or seeks to reveal events and developments that should not be dealt with by men pledged to secrecy and the maintenance of national security. Gen. Thimayya and Chaudhuri set the example for Gen.

Kaul by writing "infantile essays" assuming that what they had to say would be of interest to anyone but themselves and "scavengers of sensationalism". Gen. Chaudhuri's revelation that while he was serving in the army he was also acting as the military correspondent of an Anglo-Indian newspaper was shocking to the extreme. Gen. Kaul has gone one step ahead by dealing with aspects of administration which he had no right to discuss in public without specific permission from the Government. The publication of such "drivel" has posed the question whether the Government proposes to take any action against former officers who make use of information gained while in service for propaganda harmful to the nation as a whole. Gen. Kaul's book should be treated as a warning by the Government, and serving officers should be told what they can write for public consumption while in service or retirement.

Casual

In *The Hindustan Times* Krishna Bhatia says that despite its literary flaws the book has attracted such widespread public attention because people's suspicions and doubts about the mishandling of India's defences in 1962 have never been dispelled adequately. The inquiry into the NEFA debacles which the Government ordered with noticeable hesitation has appeared to most as an attempt to sweep the Defence Ministry dust under carpet. The avid interest that General Kaul's book aroused was thus inevitable. That the book would upset some people and that the veracity of some of its disclosures would be questioned was expected. But the refutations have been in a singularly low key. Bhatia says that what happens to the reputation of a few individuals is relatively unimportant, but the Chinese invasion has several important lessons to offer not all of which have been learnt even after more than four years. Any student of the affairs of the time should be staggered at the casual manner in which important decisions affecting national security were taken and pronouncements with deep political implications were made at the highest level. Major changes in policy were effected without studies in depth by experts and without giving the political leadership—or even the Defence Committee

of the Cabinet—adequate time to consider them. Bhatia holds Mr Menon responsible for this, because, firstly, there was a distinct tendency on his part to ride political hobby horses and secondly, instead of letting policy emerge from facts, he had decided on the policy of friendship with China and was looking for acts to support it. The display of excessive goodwill towards the Chinese is strangely contrasted with the chest-thumping that followed. That Mr Nehru should have made the statement that the army had been ordered to push the Chinese back when only three days earlier the military top brass had clearly indicated to him and Mr Menon the army's weak position only suggests that the posture of aggressive self-confidence was intended to placate critics at home. It would be interesting to estimate the role that the Opposition criticism of the Government's failure and the public cry of "wolf" had played in determining the Government's actions. Not only in 1962 but in August 1965, following the Pakistani infiltration into Kashmir, the Government's actions were influenced by the fact that Parliament was in session. Political considerations were seemingly added to purely military or defence considerations. This should offer a fascinating field of study for future historians.

The charge of casualness has been laid by *The Statesman* also which says that when the elections are over, the Government will have to reassure the country that decisions of such magnitude are no longer taken—if ever they were—in such a fashion. The paper thinks the book is an attempt to salvage the reputation Kaul lost in the military disaster of NEFA in 1962. But what he succeeds in doing primarily is damaging it further by a display of "malice and egocentricity" and by an "unsoldierly" lack of loyalty to senior and junior colleagues. This does not mean that he has written a negligible work. It is in fact a book of "some importance" because it cuts ruthlessly through the veils of secrecy in which it has become dangerously customary to wrap up the vital issues of defence in this country. Although the paper does not know for certain how much of what Kaul has written is accurate, it seems to believe what he has to say about Mr Nehru and Mr Menon. Kaul does not permit, the paper says, any feeling of sentiment for either to

prevent him from coldly dissecting their "failures"; in the case of the former Defence Minister he makes a particularly thorough job of it. Some of the charges Kaul levels against him will require careful study by the Defence authorities today. The paper also concedes that Kaul has a case when he contends that he was unfairly blamed for the Indian Army's debacle in NEFA. "That the Indian Government was to blame is generally recognised and Kaul goes to great lengths to show precisely where and how". What the paper regrets is that in his anxiety to establish his own guiltlessness he also singles out for blame—by name—officers senior and junior to him and demands that their failures should be noted. There are references throughout the book to General J. N. Chaudhuri which might have been written by a jealous prima donna about a more successful rival. It becomes impossible for the paper not to reach the conclusion that the Chinese at least did India one good turn in that the casualties they inflicted in 1962 included both the Defence Minister and General Kaul.

In his Sunday column in *The Times of India*, N.J.N. has discussed the question whether ministers, administrators, and army officers should be permitted to "unburden" themselves when they are out of office or have left the services. The point is not one that can be controlled by a simple regulation. No one in an organised society surely has the right—despite an urge to self-expression or the tattered platitudes on freedom—to "tell it all" whenever he is inclined to do so. On balance, the dangers of uncontrolled controversy are more acceptable than those of suppression. There is everything to be said for clearing the air provided this is done responsibly and in accordance with prescribed procedure. Obviously, would-be authors on leaving the Government or the services cannot be allowed a free run of all the material to which they had access in their official capacities. Nor can it be argued that their personal experiences in their official roles are their private property. But within the very broad limits of national security anything that promotes an understanding of events and a discussion of them should certainly not be discouraged. What is essential is that the publication of such books should be governed by some sort of

procedure, however elastic, so that a balance can be preserved between open discussion and unavoidable discretion.

Mental Breakdown

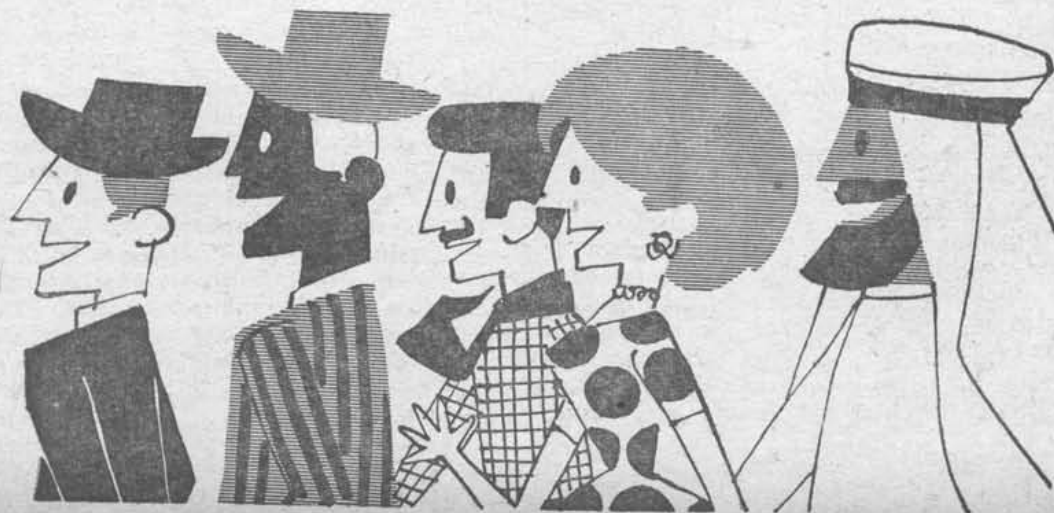
The military observer of *Hindustan Standard* writes with such assurance and obvious evidence of personal knowledge that it is difficult to resist the suspicion that he was one of those generals whom Kaul has impugned in his book. The observer gives his own version of the dispute between Mr Menon and Mr Morarji Desai, and what he says boils down to a struggle between the public and the private sector. He said that Mr Menon appeared to have a hate towards the private sector in India and the automobile industry in particular. With firms already existing in the country and producing similar vehicles, the establishment of factories to produce Shaktiman trucks, Japanese jeeps and one-ton trucks with foreign collaboration in the public sector was resisted, but Mr Menon had his way and valuable foreign exchange was frittered away. Defence production, it was invariably argued by Finance, should be confined to those items which the private sector was incapable of producing and foreign exchange utilised in purchasing military stores and equipment which neither the public nor the private sector could purchase. But Mr Menon's object was to remove from the private sector its largest purchaser and to cripple it. Recounting how Kaul fared in NEFA the observer says that Kaul suffered from "mental breakdown". While a fresh infantry division was deploying itself in the foothills south of Bomdila to give battle to the Chinese should they attempt to enter the plains north of the Brahmaputra, and the 11 Brigade was fighting a rearguard action to extricate itself from Walong, Kaul was thinking in terms of removing his headquarters from Tezpur to Gauhati. What was more he did so without orders and then sent a signal that he had done so. He was ordered to return to Tezpur immediately. He went on to inform everyone that the Chinese would be in Tezpur in a matter of two hours and caused general panic, the local gaol opening its gates and releasing the criminals and the bank burning its currency. Instead of infusing con-



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fidence in people, he went out of his way to cause general confusion. His final effort was to lock himself up in a room and "to whimper like a whipped dog". Then he wrote out his resignation and after weeping in the garden of the officers' mess, which was crowded with officers, handed it over. He was ordered to go to his room and not to return until he had ceased crying and to wear dark glasses to hide the redness of his eyes. The resignation was sent to New Delhi and was accepted the next day.

Kaul has found a sympathetic reader in Frank Moraes of *The Indian Express* who says that it is the book's great merit that Kaul does not attempt to absolve himself entirely but accepts the blame in so far as he was a vital cog in the military machine at that time. But his plea is that the prime, major blame must rest with the politicians who despite warnings by the army commanders persisted in putting political considerations before military urgencies. If Kaul's facts are correct, his indictment is formidable and cannot be ignored. It should induce rethinking in great depth. Moraes is another columnist to be amazed by the casual, almost amateurish way in which military decisions of the gravest import were reached in New Delhi and Tezpur at the height of the fighting in NEFA. Obviously, there was no long-range, overall plan for NEFA or Ladakh though much earlier two plans, associated respectively with the names of Generals Thimayya and Thorat, were mentioned in connection with NEFA. Kaul mentions neither the Thimayya nor the Thorat plan in his book and the accounts he gives of the various conferences at the highest military levels reveal hasty, improvised, ad hoc planning whose casualness would surprise even a non-professional. If the Chinese were the first to intrude into our territory it cannot be denied that Nehru's "throw them out" order contrary to the military realities about which the army commanders, including Kaul, had warned him precipitated a situation which our army was unable to control. Political credulity had already led to military negligence. Now the military ignorance of our political higher-ups, despite the efforts of the military commanders, was to lead the country into disaster.

Book Review

MACBIRD

By Barbara Garson
Grassinol Press, Berkeley and New York

ISN'T it rather surprising that at present we have very few good satirists in Bengal? Of the two necessary conditions for the growth of satire—existence of moral evil in society and social consciousness—the first is surely present. But about the second, notwithstanding the senile prudery of professional social reformers, one has to have reservations. In this country, social and political awareness is very often viewed with suspicion.

Only the other day, the organisers of a Natya Sammelan, allegedly representing the Bengali theatre, denied a particular troupe the right to perform a play about Vietnam; while in "God's own country" the voice of protest is very often raised not only against the American role in Vietnam, but against imperialist policies as a whole. Recently this protest of the younger generation in America found expression in *Macbird*, a political parody, with President Johnson as its leading character. *Macbird* is a play in three acts, written by Barbara Garson, a girl in her early twenties.

The story and to some extent the structure of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are adapted to present the struggle for political supremacy between President Johnson and the Kennedys. Vice-President Macbird assassinates President John Ken-o-Dunc (the name sounds very much like a combination of John Kennedy and Duncan) under the instigation of his wife Lady Macbird (Lady Macbeth and Lady Bird) and himself becomes the President. After this crime Lady Macbird is haunted by a sense of guilt and ultimately loses her mental balance. In a scene, closely resembling the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth*, she complains of smell of blood in her hand. But instead of the banquet scene we have a play within the play after the manner of *Hamlet*, wherein Robert Ken-o-Dunc, the brother of the murdered President plans to catch the conscience of Macbird. During the performance of the play within the play Macbird betrays his guilt. In the meantime Robert Ken-o-Dunc gathers the sup-

port of other senators to oust President Macbird. At the end of the play the disheartened Macbird dies of heart attack and Robert Ken-o-Dunc succeeds him.

Echoes From Shakespeare

Parts of many Shakespearean plays have been adapted to suit the present American context. Thus, the first scene of *Macbird* opens with three witches: the first is dressed like a Beatnik girl student, the second is a Black Moslem, selling "Mahomet speaks", and the third is an old socialist. Instead of the supernatural forebodings before Caesar's death in Shakespeare's play, the recent power failure in New York is made to forebode the death of President Macbird. Frequent echoes from *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Henry V* haunt and tickle us at one and the same time. Like any other mock-heroic work of genius, *Macbird* makes us live in two worlds—in the world of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and in the world of President Johnson, the Kennedys, the Senators, in fact in the very heart of present-day America. References to the bluntness and provincial vulgarity of President Macbird, to the refinement of the Ken-o-Dunc family, phrases like New Frontier (so frequently used in real life by President Johnson), presentation of McNamara as Lord MacNamara, of Vietnam as Vietland—all these and the phonetic similarities between the names of the main characters of the play and the major political figures in America make the disguise of the play too thin. At times the attack is too direct and daring as in the following passage:

Messenger—There's news, more news!
Macbird —Spit out your spiteful news.
Messenger—(out of breath) Peace paraders marching.
Macbird —Stop 'em.
Messenger—Beatniks burning draft cards!
Macbird —Jail 'em.
Messenger—Negroes starting sit-ins.
Macbird —Gas 'em.
Messenger—Latin rebels rising.
Macbird —Shoot 'em.
Messenger—Asian peasants arming.
Macbird —Bomb 'em.
Messenger—Congressmen complaining.
Macbird —Fuck 'em.
Flush out this filthy scum; destroy dissent
It's treason to defy your President.

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And yet, nowhere, except in the play within the play, where a very unfair reference is made to an illegitimate child of the President's daughter, does the satire degenerate into lampoon. The play was hailed as a comic masterpiece by distinguished critics like Dwight Macdonald. The author, a former California student demonstrator, has not only comic genius but political insight as well. The real significance of Macbird lies in the fact that its author never for-demonstrator, has not only comic gets that the imperialist-capitalist system is vitiated through and through and it matters little whether the refined John Ken-o-Dunc or the blunt Macbird or the crafty Robert Ken-o-Dunc is at the helm of affairs. But for this right perspective the play would have been mistaken as a kind of election pamphlet written in favour of Robert Kennedy. The myth of the enlightened and benevolent John Ken-o-Dunc is exploded when we notice the basic similarity of outlook in the speeches of all the three presidents.

John Ken-o-Dunc—

"We shall not force small nations to their knees. / We never shall, as tyrants, tie them to us; our force shall only force them to be free."

or

I see a New Frontier beyond her seas. She shall o'erflow her shores and burst her banks, / Eastward extend till East does meet with West, / And West until the West does touch the East / And over this hot and plagued earth descend. / The *POX AMERICANA*.

Similarly, after the assassination of John Ken-o-Dunc, President Macbird declares:

"And stretching out beyond our nation's shores, / To East and West around this seething globe... we meant to be firemen of peace, / dousing flames with freedom's forceful flow / ... In short we seek that *POX AMERICANA* / That all the Freedom-loving world desires".

And again, Robert Ken-o-Dunc, when he becomes the President—

"History assigned to me... to follow my great predecessor's path / In hewing out the smooth society... I pledge my solemn word / To lift aloft the banner of Macbird."

The same imperialist ideal is present in the speeches of all the three presidents and gives the play its essential dramatic unity.

REKHA CHAKRABARTI

Letters

Vietnam Mismatch

It seems to me that what enthusiasm there is among Americans for the Vietnam war is a conditioned reflex to the implanted notion that "our wonderful boys in Vietnam" are "heroes" engaged in "honorable combat" in the cause of "freedom". Therefore, as a prerequisite to creating a climate of public opinion favorable to peace, these heroics must be exposed for what they are.

When, a few weeks ago, U.S. bombers in Vietnam mistakenly dropped a soupcon of napalm on an American company, killing three and wounding 16, Uncle Sam's pampered momma's boys screamed so loud and long at getting just a teeny-weeny taste of their own medicine they could be heard all around the world, and the newspapers of America bled for them. HORROR! cried the headlines. TRAGIC ERROR. FLAMING MASSACRE.

What do you suppose the reactions of those gum-chewing loudmouths would be if they were called upon to endure the almost incessant napalm-phosphorus burning, fragmentation bombing, helicopter strafing and artillery pounding that the heavily outnumbered, half-starved, poorly clothed, ill-armed, malaria-ridden, medicine-deprived National Liberation Front forces have suffered these past two years? And how do you suppose the psychotically hysterical civilian population of the United States would stand up to the barbarous mass-murder tactics that Vietnamese children, women and old men have taken from the valorous American forces of "freedom" and "democracy"?

The real heroes of the Vietnam war are the Vietnamese people. They could be forgiven if they mistakenly attributed to President Johnson Chairman Mao's famous saying, with a slight twist: "Democracy comes out of the barrel of a gun".

But essentially it's not a question of communism or democracy, it's one of humanity.

Myself one-eighth Asian, I am certain that most Asians share my contempt for the American performance in Vietnam. A veteran of six years' voluntary service in World War II, including jungle-fighting in Burma, I am of the opinion that a platoon

of Burma Eurasian boy scouts is the superior of a full company of Uncle Sam's so-called "Screaming Eagles" or "Leathernecks".

In a TV interview not long ago, doubly-honored Nobel prize-winner Dr Linus Pauling described the American war on the Vietcong as being like himself "fighting Shirley Temple when she was four years old". With due respect to the distinguished scientist-humanist, I should like to state that ultimate American victory over the Vietcong would be tantamount to the world heavyweight boxing champion knocking out an unranked featherweight opponent at the end of fifteen gruelling rounds.

D. HOWARD ADY
LOS ANGELES
California

Aid To Hanoi

A stray wild guess of *The Economist*—many of whose reports on China and the Chinese attitude to Vietnam are often branded as slander in pro-Peking circles here—prompted you to conclude that China is supplying 70 per cent of the war materials to Vietnam in comparison with a meagre 20 per cent from the Soviet Union.

According to the Russians, as reported in the Press, Soviet supplies to North Vietnam during 1965 was about \$550 million even by conservative estimates and, as Americans say, there was a sharp increase in such assistance during 1966. The Chinese supplies, then, according to the figures given by you, should be at least around \$1875 million during 1965. This seems absurd since, according to her own admission, China is supplying to Vietnam light arms, clothing and technical personnel for repairing roads and bridges. Anyone with a little knowledge of Vietnamese realities will appreciate that such a huge amount (i.e. \$1875 million) cannot be expended under the heads mentioned above. Moreover, it seems highly improbable that China, at this stage of development, could have parted with that much of her resources during 1965 at the risk of serious economic repercussions.

Owing to intensified air raids, the Soviet assistance during 1966 naturally increased—in the shape of both SAMs and fighter planes. To suppose that a corresponding increase had also taken place in Chinese assis-

NOW

tance during the year is anything but sane thinking. Moreover, there cannot be any Chinese role in the sophisticated modern air battles that are going on over North Vietnam.

From all accounts, therefore, it would be wise to keep silent on the question of quantum of aid since little is known about it to outsiders.

A READER
Calcutta

The Socialist

The following advertisement, inserted in a London daily by the "Harold Wilson Memorial Committee", might be of interest to you on the occasion of your Republic Day:

We have the distinguished honour of being members of the committee to raise Five Million Pounds to place a statue of Harold Wilson in front of the Houses of Parliament.

This Committee was in quite a quandary about selecting the proper site for the statue. It was thought not wise to place it beside the statue of George Washington, who never told a lie, nor beside Lloyd George, who never told the truth, since Harold Wilson could never tell the difference.

After careful consideration we thought it would be a good idea to place it beside the statue of Christopher Columbus, the greatest socialist of them all, in that he started out not knowing where he was going and, upon arrival, did not know where he was and on returning did not know where he had been, and did it on borrowed money.

Five thousand years ago, Moses said to the Children of Israel, "Pick up your shovels, mount your asses and camels, and I will lead you to the promised land". Nearly five thousand years later Frank Cousins said "Lay down your shovels, sit on your asses, light a Camel, this is the promised Land". And now Harold Wilson is stealing your shovels, kicking your asses, raising the price of Camels and taking over the promised land.

If you are one of the Citizens who has any money left after paying taxes, we expect a generous contribution from you for this worthwhile project.

J. SINGH
London

Containing China

Letter from America (Now, January 13) is quite revealing. On February 24, 1966, U.S. Defence Secretary, MacNamara, too, said, "The focus of the U.S. defence problem has

shifted perceptibly towards the Far East... The threat of nuclear war and even of large-scale conventional wars has become more latent, while the threat of local insurgency and wars of liberation has become more active..." President Johnson seems to have sent a secret message to the Soviet leaders for "a new bid to avoid a costly race between the two countries over defence systems against ballistic missiles" (*Statesman*, January 13). If the USA can come to an agreement with the Soviet leaders on this, they can very easily switch the money thus saved on to the war front of Vietnam. This news has come simultaneously with the increase of 6% surcharge on all income and corporate taxes in the USA.

Recently the Soviet army newspaper *Red Star* in an article said that Russia could not count on Chinese support in an all-out war with the USA. Is the article an open invitation to the USA to go ahead with their containment of China policy, and a green signal for blasting away the nuclear weapons sites in China, or a preparation for the ground of Soviet non-intervention if and when China faces an all-out attack from the USA? Senator Henry M. Jackson, Chairman of the Military Application Sub-Committee of the Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy held that "by the early 1970, China would possess inter-continental missiles capable of striking the United States".

K. RAY
Calcutta

'A Colonial Game'

I have not the least doubt in my mind that cricket is a game hostile to Indian conditions. It came with the British and made its way into the life of some feudal rulers. True, it was gradually taken up by other people, but they were drawn from high society and for them sophistication and snobbery are indispensable qualities. Commoners of the lower tier, however, have never been able to afford this game except in the narrow lanes and bye-lanes of poverty-infested quarters. Small wonder, therefore, that, with the abolition of Native States and feudal institutions, cricket should be the monopoly of the sophisticated class.

There is no escaping the fact that cricket is a symbol of British cha-

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racter inter se. This is the reason why no countries outside the hold of the British Empire—now the Commonwealth—admitted it in its range of sports. Even within the British Empire, cricket did not find favour with the majority of the subject members; the minority who accepted it represented the British blood and the Indian blue-blood. Cricket has come to stay here not so much as a sport for this class but as an outlet for the suppressed desire to become English. And it is this which induces the sophisticated to justify the colossal loss of man-days involved in test cricket; it is the same class which cries against strikes in the name of saving labour-hours which the country, we are told, cannot afford to waste.

It is hard to fit in cricket with industrialism. Even in England, the home of cricket, the game has lost much of its old glamour in the wake of the liquidation of the colonies, because the abundance of care-free time and regal pomp, which are the indispensable accompaniments of cricket, is not so easily available now to the British people. Australia and South Africa are somewhat untouched by the problem and will, therefore, continue to enjoy the game for some time to come. But how does beggarly India dare to compete with her affluent counterparts? In India everything seems to be possible, for it is the traditional home of all things unthinkable anywhere in the world.

LATIKA BHATTACHARJEE (Mrs)
Calcutta

Dange On Indira

Mr Dange has more than once, at Press conferences, elaborated on his preference for Mrs Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister as against Mr Morarji Desai. This hair-splitting reminds one of the semantic acrobatics made notorious by our lady Prime Minister when she differentiates between deaths by 'malnutrition' and those by 'starvation'. Perhaps what Mr Dange means is that if Mrs Indira Gandhi were to become Prime Minister again after the elections, the country would face death by 'malnutrition', whereas if Mr Desai were to take her place we would all face death by 'starvation'.

S. R. RAJEN
Calcutta

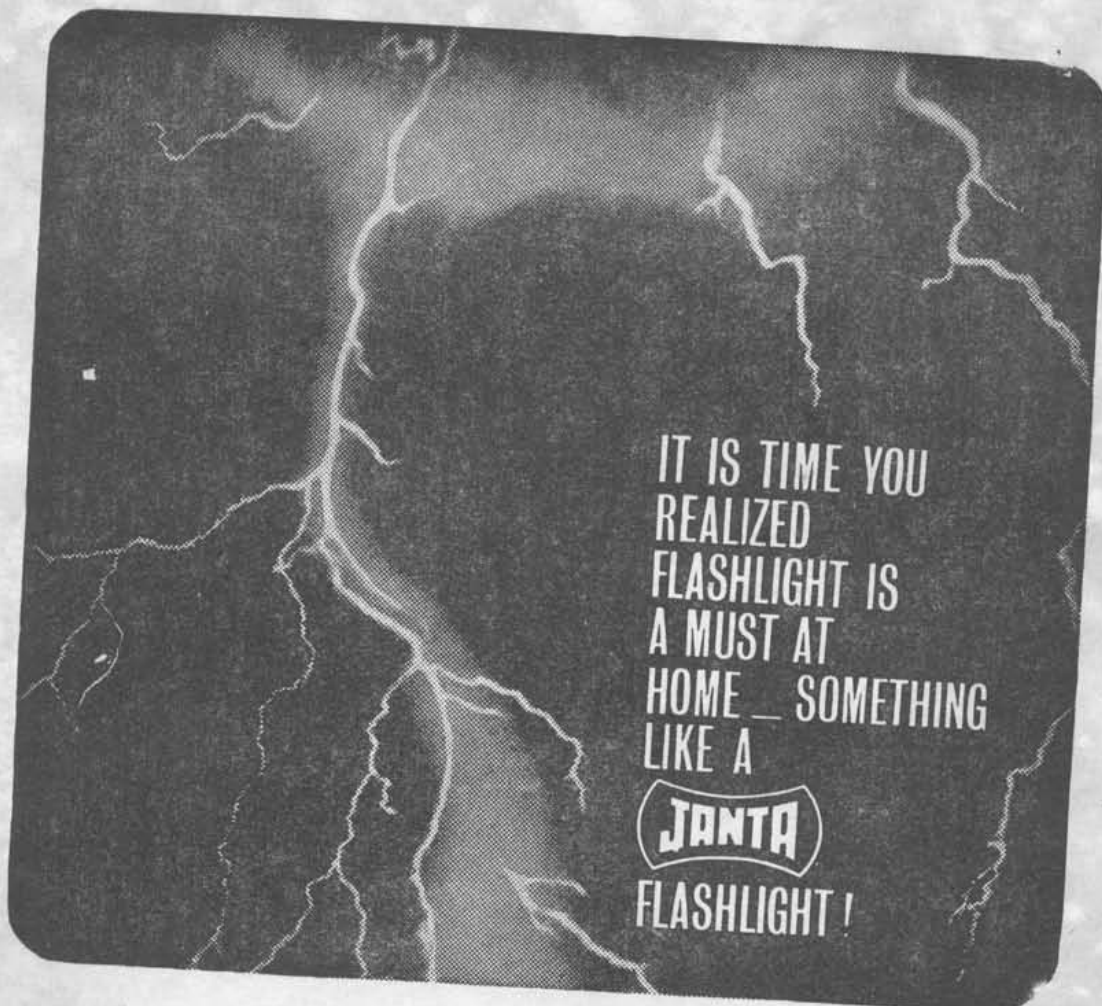
The Ferment In China

At a time when the hullabaloo over China's cultural revolution has reached its peak, it is heartening to see *Now* coming out with the brilliant editorial, "Masses on the move" (January 20). When the newspapers vie with each other in publishing mutually conflicting reports on the "hooliganism" committed by the Red Guards and the number of persons killed in the process (two Bengali newspapers put the number at 1500 and 5000 respectively), it becomes the urgent duty of a weekly like *Now* to speak out the truth, especially when there is an unholy alliance between the Western and the Socialist Press over the presentation of news about China. The whole question of China's cultural revolution must be viewed in the background of the evolution of Chinese society as a result of seventeen years of Communist reconstruction. It is to be borne in mind that the purification of the existing social structure and political set-up becomes a historical necessity in the interest of over-all progress of a socialist country and the process to be followed is bound to be relentless if it is to be "complete" in every sphere. The cultural revolution did not start all of a sudden and the debate on it began a long time ago. Indeed it was one of the most original parts of Mao's thinking mind and he contributed a great deal to the consolidation and stability of the socialist forces by guiding his country through intense ideological fight within the party and other mass organisations. As a result of Chinese economic, social, political and cultural developments, several sharp contradictions have inevitably showed up and these contradictions led Mao to launch an all-out offensive against "those persons in authority" who, by their thinking and outlook posed a potential danger to the revolution. And because "Mao Tse-tung believes that revolution is a continuous process, involving ceaseless struggle against the remnants of bourgeois modes of production and thought against contradictions within the people", he has used the mass organisations and the energetic youth community as the vanguard of the cultural revolution. This mass participation, as you call it, has been branded in the Western Socialist Press as "large-scale hooliganism" organis-

ed under a mischievous Mao. One of the revisionist spokesmen in this country has summarily rejected the Red Guards as a band of "hoodlums" and "anarchists" ultimately aiming at the destruction of the Chinese Communist Party. It outsmarts even the worst specimen of Yankee journalism.

The New Year's Day editorial in *People's Daily and Red Flag*, speaking of some persons in authority, said: "Those persons reversed right and wrong, juggled black and white, encircled and suppressed revolutionaries, clamped down on different views, practised white terror". The editorial pledged to carry the revolution "to all classes in 1967" and to fight against those "who are taking the capitalist road and 'who are making sure of their social base and their influence inside the party.'" For this end, it urged mobilisation of "the masses of workers and peasants, who form 90% of the population". Hostile American Imperialism and Soviet Revisionism have led China to seek a more intensified and accelerated transition to socialism. In implementing this urgent task of bringing about major changes in social, economic and cultural relationships, opposition from "entrenched interests at various levels" had to be faced and it is no wonder that "the latest developments in China have been turbulent". In cultural and social spheres, the fight has to be waged against the age-old and outmoded thoughts and beliefs and in the economic field, a campaign has to be carried on in a sustained way against those "gainfully" employed. No wonder, China's cultural revolution has caused consternation in those circles who had long been evading their revolutionary duties in spite of their supposed affinity with socialism, and who are traditionally anti-communist in outlook and leave no chance of making political capital out of any major shake-up within a socialist country. The dual aims of the cultural revolution are to revitalise the youth with revolutionary idealism and to encourage the workers and peasants to increase production and these should work as a guarantee against any opportunistic machinations of any professedly socialist country and external imperialist, or otherwise, aggression.

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